Miscellaneous Verse

by

W. S. G. Taylor

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I SPENT a whole year weaving songs for her;
One day I laid my pack before her feet
Of songs I wove to be a messenger
To tell her that the ways of love are sweet:
Since then my pack has journeyed many a mile,
Since then my heart has been a traveller,
And all my wares—the memory of a smile.

M. Kinder.

WAITING!

Tonight my eyes are dim with unshed tears,
I'm looking back upon the lonely years,
If only I could crush you to my heart
To soothe this pain and still this stinging smart,
—But you are gone!

I let you go in anger and in pride,
And now our lives the restless seas divide,
Oh why was I so foolish and so blind!
Oh why were you so proud and so unkind!

And sometimes, when the weary sun seeks rest,
Behind those two tall trees you loved the best,
I think I hear your footstep at the gate,
And spring to meet you—but alas! to wait,
for you are gone!

A MEMORY

My world was grey before I saw your smile,
And then it seemed my sun shone for awhile,
But darker than the night is my despair,
For though you are my all—you cannot care!

Ah! would that I had never seen your eyes,
Wherein whose velvet depths my lost world lies;
And though in after years you'll count me naught,
I'll love you for the ray of sun you brought.

SYMPATHIE

Sad little heart be still,
Nor fret for the love thou hast known,
Sighs will not bring back one kiss,
Nor tears one brief hour that has flown.

Tired little heart do not moan,
Your cry is the saddest I've heard,
Such a mournful and desolate tone,
Like the wail of a lone sea-bird.

Perhaps she will come back some day,
Then You'll forget these dark hours,
She will kiss all the tear-drops away,
As the sun dries the dew from the flow'rs.

LONELY

It was so hard to let you go,
  So hard to say goodbye!
And you never knew the heartache
  Nor heard the stifled sigh.

I jested lightly to the end,
  For you were going West—
To marry: I was but your friend!
  And you had never guessed.

FIDELE

I wonder would it please you just to know,
That anywhere and everywhere you go,
My thoughts like homing birds take flight to
you
And follow, follow, all the wide world through.

PASSION

With the strength of the Gale—
When with sinister tone,
It lashes the ocean to billows of foam
And swallows the ship that will never come home,
—I can love.

With the softness of Dawn—
When the sun creeps to view,
And mountain and meadow are green in the dew,
And the lark from his brushwood trills matins anew,
—I can love.

With the heat of the noon—
On the tropical sand,
When desert and jungle and mountain and rand
Are writhing beneath the sun's powerful hand,
—I can love.

SONG

Oh Sun, when you wake in your splendour,
Shine not in My lady's eyes,
Lest your glory dazzle her vision, and I
Seem worthless enough to despise.

Oh Sea, when you roll in your grandeur,
Sing not of your travels too long,
Lest my halting words are drowned in your voice,
And she hears, not my love, but your song.

O moon, when you slip from the heaven's,
Step gently across the sky,
Lest in her slumber you steal her dreams,
And waking, she pass me by.

LOST!

When God made this wonderful Planet,
And tenderly named it "Earth,"
The Devil was jealous and hid it away,
In the opposite corner to "Mirth."

Long did the Angels seek it,
With failure, and trials beset,
Till God himself took up the search,
But *He* hasn't found it yet.

CONVERSION

I once thought: Of all the fair countries,
England, my England most fair:
I welcomed its showers,
It's bright frosty days,
But that was because *you* were there.

Now delicate health takes you southwards,
Leaving me sad and depressed,
And the warm sunshine claims you
I find that I, too
Love the heat of the southlands the best!

LEFT

It was spring in the woods when I met you
And spring was in my heart;
And all through that wonderful summer
We lived in a world apart.

In a garden of beautiful flowers,
And you were my blossom supreme,
But the frost came, with the winter chill—
The roses died—and our dream.

And this frail rosebud you have left me,
Though sprung from the parent tree,
That I cherish for your dear sake, will never
Be quite just the same to me.

PASTORAL

Once on a bright sunny hillside,
A poppy was loved by the corn;
She flushed 'neath the glow of his fond ardent gaze,
"But I am so old" sighed the corn,

"I've lived through a whole spring and summer
While you but a few weeks here:"
'But I love you, I love you,' the poppy sang
Bending her slender stalk near.

So the corn and the poppy were wedded,
And happy the hours flew by,
The warm sun caressed them, the bees sauntered past
Till one day he caught a soft sigh—

And bending he asked her the reason
"I want so to kiss you, that's all,
But though I may try hard to reach you
I cannot, for you are so tall."

Then a little wind swayed them together,
And laughed as he saw her flushed face,
"She will grow, she will grow," he confided,
"She's impatient, 'tis always the case!"

And daily she grew fair and taller,
Till she whispered her wish in his ears,
But just as he kissed her, the reaper passed,
And together they dropped 'neath the shears.

REGRET

Oh bitter were the things we said
for anger reigned:
And gentleness and soft words fled
As each, we blamed;
And she was all I had
But I was anger mad,
And as I heard her sobbing—I was glad!

But bitter was the afterthought
When left alone
With humbled heart, I knew the fault
Was all my own;
But she, with wounded pride,
Sailed, on the ebbing tide
And then, one day, I heard that—she had died!

MISTS

Mist on the fields—
Silent swiftly creeping,
Muffling the cry
Of homeward drifting sheep;
Wrapping the Earth
In desolated weeping,
Hushed are the trees—
The rooks are all asleep!

Mist on the sea—
Treacherous, menacing,
Watching for prey
With eyes of fierce delight;
Clasping the ship
Betraying whilst embracing;
Hurling her victims
Helpless thro' the night.

Mist on a life—
The aftermath of weeping
Blinding a soul
That struggles forth in hope;
Love's broken faith
In death is quietly sleeping
Nothing is left,
But cold grey mist—and night.

TWILIGHT

A dim stretch of road—two birds that homeward fly;
Faint village sounds pursuing on the breeze;
A rustle of trees—a quickly paling sky:
And emptiness—a heart that knows no ease.

Vague shadowed dreams arising from the hedge,
Remembrance—a sigh—a swiftly springing tear,
A bowed breaking heart, tho' faithful to a pledge;
The end of the day—and end of all things dear.

THE DELIVERER

Oh weary years! oh empty days!
  Oh nights that wander past!
When will you come O Death to claim
  The toll that is yours at last!

Let it be soon, the moments steal
  Like shadows thro' the grass:
I have waited long my heart is cold,
  Oh Death! you will not pass?

LONELINESS

Have you wandered in a City,
Mids't it's laughing chatting people,
  Watched a conversation's animated glow;
Scanned each quickly passing figure
In the hope of recognising
  A familiar face that once you used to know?

Have you passed in disappointment
Down it's thronged and crowded pavements;
  Thrust a grimy yelling newsboy from your path;
Found the most secluded corner
For your "Special" and Corona,
  Set your teeth at every ringing hearty laugh!

What matters tho' your Bankers smile polite
    and cheerful greetings,
  That your Auto purrs a satisfying drone,
My heart goes out toward you, you grim and
    silent people,
  For you know the meaning of the word alone!

THE AWAKENING

The scent of the thyme was in the air
And Oh! the world was green!
Light was my heart—Oh! light as air
Till she broke the spell of my sylvan lair
Like a half forgotten dream!

Swift were my footsteps, as arrows freed,
And Oh! the joy of the sun!
Straight in my path she checked my speed;
No word she spoke—but I felt a need,
And followed her whispered "come"!

SOMEWHERE—IN FRANCE

T'was an hour before midnight on Xmas Eve,
The darkest he'd ever seen,
Now and again he could hear a gun,—
Then the wind would come between!

Twice he had tried to raise his head,
But the pain in his back was acute;
His fingers were bitten, and even the clay
Was frozen in lumps on his boot.

He wondered how long he'd been lying there,
Of that hellish fight in the dark,
And vaguely he wondered 'mong other things,
If his bullet had found a mark.

"It's Xmas aint it" he mumbled low,
"When Gawd came on Earth, as a kid,
But 'e might just as well o' stayed were 'e was
Fer all 'o good that 'e did.

'ung 'im, didn't they, up on a cross
'cause 'e said as 'ow 'e was King?
Bet they was worser'n these 'uns 'ere,
Fer 'e didn't do much of a thing!

Only told 'em as 'ow if they turned from the wrong
'ed forgive 'em fer all what they done,
But it's waste o' good time ter turn a bad egg,
Yer might as well talk to a 'un.

But 'ere! what about that there chap on a tree
A thief—or a something like that,
Didn't 'e say as 'e'd go 'long o' 'im
Because 'e was sorry? my 'at!—

I aint never thought o' that bit afore,
I wonder if e'd been in quad,
P'raps if I said, as 'ow I'd repent
'e might hintredooce me to God.

'Taint much of o' life, this 'ere bein' a thief,
An' I wish as I'd gone on the straight,
Being it's Xmas p'raps Gawd'll look down—
—Crikey! if that aint a gate!

Its 'eaven! blessed if it isn't, Oh Gawd!
I'm sorry! I'm sorry I swear!
Gawd, don't shut the gate, and leave me outside!
Oh Gawd! can't yer see me?—I'm 'ere!

I'm a thief, but I'm sorry, I am, Gawd and straigh
And the devil ain't always the winner,
Yer forgived a bad chap as said ter yer once,
'ave mercy on me Lord—a sinner!

And the pain of the bullet went out of his back,
And the tired head slipped back on the clay,
But the rough pray'r was heard, the pardon sent,
And God took the soul away.

WAR!
(Three Prayers)

The shells are bursting, falling
Are falling everywhere,
And, "God almighty curse 'em"!
Is the dying soldiers prayer.

The mother's tears are flowing,
And flowing silently,
And; "God forgive them for what they've done"
She murmers brokenly.

And the widow watches weary,
Nursing her grief with it's smart;
'God curse them to eternity,
For *His* death and my empty heart!'

BEFORE THE DAWN

A mud soaked plain in France,
A lull in the battles din;
And then the message along the wire;—
"Cavalry follow in!"

A steady and driving rain,
A lantern's splutt'ring glow,
A rattle of saddles and clink of spurs,
Somebody cursing low:—

A sudden and stirring cry,
As the charger throws his head;
An answering whinney from every throat,
Great eyes flaming red:—

A stamping and champing of bits;
The dawn comes gray and thin:
And then the answer along the wire;—
"Cavalry coming in!"

EVENING STAR

Slowly the Night stirs in her rosy sleep,
Stretches her cloudy arms across the skies,
Like molten bars of precious metals—sighs—
Her breath of purple azure, green and rose,
Falling a silent curtain o'er the Day
Who watching rapt'rous, knows He may not stay
But gently stoops e'er yet in sleep she lies
To kiss her brow—she opens wide her eyes,
And we poor mortals gazing from afar,
Behold with wond'rous awe the Evening Star.

LAMENT OF THE CAMEL BOY

Awake O flow'r of the desert
And leave thy dreams!
(Here at the door of thy tent with my lute I sing)
High in the arms of the night
The love-star gleams,
(Here at the door of thy tent with my lute I sing)

Sweet is thy breath as the fragrant
Moghra flow'rs!
(Here to the door of thy tent my sad heart I bring)
Awake! the desert's asleep!
The night is ours!
(Here to the door of thy tent my sad heart I bring)

Sigh but the word that bids me tear
these walls apart!
(See! at thy feet all my youth and my treasures I fling)
Thy beauty has fired my soul and
Scorched my heart!
(See! at thy feet all my youth and my treasures I fling.)

Goddess of wind O bear her word
Of my poor heart's captivity,
Goddess of Love, O be thou kind
And bid her open unto me!

SOLILOQUY

Passion—
Is a holy fire in the temple of 'Heart',
And it's High Priest is the 'Soul',
It is fed by the virgins 'Faith and Truth'
And 'Selfishness' and 'Lust' uncouth
Are banned from the worshippers scroll.

It burns with a steady intense flame,
And its fuel is 'passing time'
It's shrine—a devotion that never tires,
It's incense—deeds that love inspires,
It's rites—the heart—throbs rhyme.

DISILLUSION

Goodbye my friend! I'm sorry you must go!
And I shall miss you; shall feel more alone:
And yet I am afraid it must be so:
Your voice no longer has the same old tone.

So yet another joins the spectral train,
To haunt the lonely pathways of my heart;
The ghost of Friendship, hopelessly self-slain,
The 'Dove' that sought to play the Vultures part.

I valued you, was fond of you my friend,
Your ways familiar—dear to me, had grown,
My heart rebels that this should be the end,
Goodbye! from now I journey on alone!

TO E. J. B.

Oh yes! I love you, and no one *but* you,
And you grow nearer, dearer day by day;
I love your ways—the little things you do,
And all the wistful tender things you say.

I note with pride your carriage, free and wild;
The strong and well-knit muscles of your arm,
Yet in my eyes you're just a little child
I cuddle close, and keep away from harm.

Your little boasts and ways of self conceit
Bring to my lips a slow indulgent smile,
And when your voice is raised in anger's heat
My eyes and thoughts caress you all the while!

Oh yes! I love you and my love is deep,
It's age is near upon a thousand years.
'Twas born one night when in His childish sleep
A Mother kissed her Baby thro' Her tears.

PLAYTIME

Tell me my fortune O Gipsy old,
See! I have crossed your hand with gold.
Is it a lover, or wealth or fame,
And shall I be happy O Gipsy Dame?

Child, in your eyes I read your fate,
And you will never be rich or great;
Lovers will come, but none will stay,
And sorrow will walk with you alway!

IN BABYLON

There was a king in Babylon,
(Take heed my heart!)
Whose life was all one joy and song,
(Be warned my heart!)
His years sped by with honeyed hours
And dark eyed maids and jasmin bow'rs
Until he saw the Northern Flow'r,
Ohé! my heart!

She was so fair her eyes were blue,
(Take heed my heart!)
With skin so fine and fair of hue,
(Be warned my heart!)
Her hair was like the young ripe corn,
Her presence as a fresh-sprung dawn,
A swaying willow was her form;
So fair, my heart!

His heart grew sick of honeyed hours
(Take heed my heart!)
Of heavy-scented jasmin bow'rs
(Be warned my heart)
He who once had loved it all
Now felt its cloying sweetness pall
And straightway left his Palace Hall
Ohé! my heart!

And he who homage never paid
(Take heed my heart!)
Now knelt before this Northern Maid
(Be warned my heart!)
He bowed his proud and kingly head,
For her small dainty foot to tread,
And vowed to follow where she led,—
She led, my heart!

And so he worshipped from afar,
(Take heed my heart!)
No earthly love could reach a star!
(Be warned my heart!)
And so he dreamed his life away,
Grew pale and languished day by day,
And when she left that land he lay
and died, my heart!

"?"

It's just a little something
That you no doubt would pass—
Yet as I wander here among the trees,
It brings the tear drops burning,
And stirs my weary heart—
It's the little rays of sunshine aslanting thro' the trees.

She loved to sit and watch them
As they filtered thro' the leaves,
And now she's gone life seems to me a farce.
Can you wonder that I hate them
Now my heart is cold and grim—
Those little rays of sunshine that are speckled on the grass!

QUIEN SABE

How can I say my heart will never change;
That tho' I love you now the years will bring
No winter blast to chill our dream of spring?

How can I say this thrill of pulsing life
Shall run like fire forever thro' my veins?
The desert sands grow cold before the rains!

How can I say that 'this' or 'that' shall be?
The answer to the riddle lies with you
And all the little heedless things you do.

For while you seek my love, then it is yours,
A slight, a coldness, or a careless sting,
And lo! it lies a cold and lifeless thing!

TWINKLETOES

Little blue eyes, where are you gazing
Beneath those closed lids, smooth and white?
I cannot fancy they never will waken:
We parted but yesternight.

Little soft lips, so rosy and parted
Pucker again in your old sunny smile,
I cannot bear this dread silence for ever:
Speak for a little while!

Little white hands, so dainty and fragile,
So restless in ease and so winsome in play,
I cannot think 'tis but *one* night and day since
Those little fists beat me away!

Little gay feet, now resting for ever
That never grew weary of dancing all day.
I thank Him for strewing your pathway with roses
And taking the thorns from your way.

SPRINGTIME

'Kiss me' you said, and I kissed you,
And then you turned away
And said you must be going,
Altho' I begged you 'Stay'.

'Someday' you said when I pressed you
'The world will teach you why!'
You kissed my hand so gently
And whispered low "Goodbye—
—There's things a law can punish a man
—But there's some where he gives his word
—Never to lie to a little child
—Or trap a singing bird!"

Altho' she bade him 'Go'
The 'Other' chose to stay.
And because he didn't know
The "Chosen" went away.
Altho' she hoped in vain
He sent no sign or word
So the 'Other' tried again
And caged the singing bird.

Good luck is a thing that comes our way
When we're far too tired to see.
Misfortunes' a thing that walks right in
With our early morning tea.
Sorrows' a thing that follows around
Most of the whole day thro'—But—
Happiness waits at the end of the trail
With the Eventide—and You.

WHY?

Was it all part of the game Dear
The sweets and the kisses and flowers?
And the heart that you said was aflame Dear
Only a spell of the hours?

Didn't you mean what you said Dear
Was it only a madness of June?
Or because the roses were red Dear
Or only the fault of the Moon?

Those kisses that flutter'd my heart Dear
Did they mean *nothing* to you?
Were you just playing a part Dear
Oh! was *none* of it true!

Why did you make me care Dear
Only to leave me alone?
Do you think it was hardly fair Dear
Surely you *must* have known!

FRIENDSHIP

When the soul you tried to strangle
Heaves a sigh and gains its breath,
Advances with a fearsome battle yell:
When the room is thick with shadows
And your thoughts flit to and fro
Like little red-tongued devils out of Hell:
When the Cities seem to crush you,
And you pace your room and curse,
And your mental balance seems to sway and bend
And you're drowning in a blackness—and—
You grip a cool firm hand
And hear the cheery greeting of a friend.

AFTERMATH

'Who are ye, Mournful Ones
Dark shrouded weeping Ones?
'We are the silent Ones,
Mourn we our dead!

Though Victory ye cry
Raising your banners high
Some 'neath the cold earth lie,
Mourn we our dead'!

'Rouse ye! ye Selfish Ones!
Think ye your noble sons
Shrinkingly faced the guns?
Mourn not your dead!

Could ye but raise the clay
Each frozen lip would say
'Proudly the price we pay!
There *are* no dead!

REQUIEM

Here on the desolate shores lash ye O Waves!
Call ye a funeral hymn over the graves—
Nay—not of the silent dead for they are blest;
But the bruised breaking hearts, never at rest!

BEREAVEMENT

I'm away on the wings of thought,
I'm down in a tree-fringed dell;
And I'm trying again
With a heart-hungry pain
To recover the broken spell.

But the notes of the birds ring false,
And the breeze has an alien sting;
And I'm gazing again
With heart-stinging pain
On a plain little golden ring.

LULLABY

The fairies have pulled down the curtains,
And shut out the light of the day,
Your dollies are tired and sleepy,
And Daddy is on his way.

So shut up the gates of your 'Castle,'
'Golly' will guard it till dawn,
While *you* go off on your journey
To the land where the poppies are born.

GOLDEN HEAD

Look up! look up little golden head!
Can I see tears in those eyes of blue?
What! 'tis unkind word I said?
Never an unkind word to *you*.
Come! look up little golden head,
Mother knows best for her little one.
See! there's a kiss for every tear;
Come, cuddle closer, 'twas only fun!

APRIL

I've closed up my books, and I've thrown down my lessons
I've just heard a cuckoo outside in the trees
And this morning I saw the last fledging flutter
Away from the nest way up under the eaves.

Oh, I know a boat just down by the ferry,
She leaks and she rolls like an old bumble bee,
And I know a boy with eyes brown and merry,
Who's waitin' an' whistlin' an' whistlin' an' waitin
—For me.

We'll charter the Polly (If Rob doesn't see us)
Once he was proud of her, prouder than we,
Till she took so to rollin' an' lettin' in water,
Now he's paintin' the bows of the new 'Nancy Lee'.

Oh! I know a spot just down by the rushes:
(Mother won't miss me if I'm back for tea)
A place fit for pirates—Listen d'ye hear him?
He's waitin' an' whistlin' an' whistlin' an' waitin'
—For me!

DREAMS

Sometimes in my dreams you come to me,
And gently smooth my hair and kiss my hands,
And whisper words of love such foolishness
And things a lover only understands.

And then I murmur sleepily your name,
And stretch my arms to hold you dear, and smile;
And all the world seems very far away,
And you are with me just a little while.

At other times you crush me in your arms;
I feel with joy the throbbing of your heart,
Your burning kisses seek my eager mouth,
I wake—and we are half the world apart!

THE MART

And the devil came with his wares
  And he shouted aloud 'who'll buy!'
And the youth of the world
All festive and curled
  Crowded around at his cry.

But he bartered with cunning skill,
  And would take no coin for pay,
But a smile from one—
And a tear from one—
  And no one bade him nay.

Then the devil made off with his spoils,
  And oh! how he laughed with glee
He had reaped in a harvest
Of youthful dreams
  And left but misery.

EVENTIDE!

I am wandring in the meadows by the sea,
Down the dear familiar path that once we knew.
While all the rooks are whispring, sleepily,
And poppies reach to catch the falling dew.

Far down below, upon the quiet beach,
The little wavelets cease their play and yawn,
And seek their Mother Sea's quiet arms to reach,
And she will keep them safe until the morn.

The trees in leafy music bid goodnight
To all the feathered folk within their arms;
The homeward stragglers haste their winging flight,
While over all there steals a hushful calm.

And I—I wander in the fields alone—
While flaming sunset sinks to purple blue,
And You are sleeping 'neath a battlefield,
And *I* must break my heart to come to you!

ROMANY

The wind and the land are a part of me
And I am part of the sea,
And the little they leave between the three
That part I give to thee.

So sigh nor pine—for a love like mine
Must ever be wild and free!
A gypsy's love, like a mating dove,
Would die in captivity.

THIRST!

Over the wastes of desert sand
  The evening breezes swell;
As driven by the Devil's hand
  Straight from the gates of Hell.
My eyes like glowing embers sear
My brain, yet 'tis not that I fear—
  —'Tis, yet another day!

Mocking, the Stars are looking out,
  Damn them! they dance and jeer;
The cursed Moon, she sits there too,
  With grinning crafty leer.
They're all conspiring, them and she,
They cackle at my misery.
  —God! will it never end!

How many miles to Bambury?
  Three score and ten.
Can I get there by candlelight?
  Yes! and back agen!
Hush there Jenny, you'll wake the mites—
  —Goodbye Bess old mare—
The crows won't bother—water hole?
  Say old Moon, don't stare!

EVENTIDE

A quiet pebbled beach,
  A glory in the West,
A softly murmured whisper
  From every white capped crest;
And you sit strangely silent
  While in my heart are tears;
Behind—the gath'ring darkness;
  Ahead—the lonely years.

And one short night to part us,
  One crowded night of pain;
Then you will go forever,
  While forever I remain.

The dawn will break tomorrow
  On this red pebbled shore;
The sun will shine as brightly
  From skies as blue as yore;
The little waves will prattle
  To their ancient Mother Sea,
But dawn will never break again
  —For me!

WHY?

Why is it I no longer love the sea
With that same single heartedness of old?
Why is it that the little fleecy clouds
That thrilled me once, now leave me strangely cold?
The colour of the pebbles on the beach,
The blowing spume, the calling sea-bird's cry,
Once filled me with the yearning of desire,
But since you came 'tis strangely altered
—Why?

BROTHERS

Played we together, my brother and I,
And I was my brother's friend.
Grew we to manhood, my brother and I,
Mine to protect and defend.

Loved we together, my brother and I,
A woman a devil would vend.
Betraying us both: Now silent they lie—
And I was my brother's friend.

Why do you come tonight,
  Ghost of a Dream long dead;
That I buried out of sight,
  With lillies at its head;
Why do you crowd tonight
  Around my bridal bed?

See how the soft moonlight
  Gleams on this golden band;
A bond that binds me tight
  To husband pow'r and land.
I would give it all tonight
  O Dream, for the touch of your hand!

IF

If she were here
To hold my hand and say:
"What is it dear"?
The darkended path,
The narrow winding way
Would seem more clear.

If she were here
With gentleness to dry
The falling tear,
An aching heart
Its loneleness could bear,
If she were here.

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